

A Report to the 46th District

Representative
**Phyllis
Gutierrez
Kenney**



Spring 2005

**Representative
Phyllis Gutiérrez-Kenney**
46th Legislative District

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Economic Development,
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Legislative Committee on
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Dear Neighbors and Friends,

We make Seattle our home because we enjoy the beauty and diversity this region has to offer. Our state has top ranked universities that prepare students for the 21st century. And we work in many industries like aerospace, technology, the trades and pharmaceuticals. We are offered so many opportunities as residents of this great state.

The role of state government is to fight for the values that make us call Washington our home. My job in Olympia is to preserve and improve our quality of life. Whether you are a student or raising a family, it is about affordable and accessible health care and education. It is about moving people on our roads and earning a livable wage with good benefits.

Before we conclude the 105-day session, we will write a budget for 2005-07. The challenge is overcoming a projected \$2.2 billion budget shortfall. In previous years, I helped pass balanced budgets without new taxes. But to do so required deep cuts in critical areas. Without new revenue, I am afraid that we will adversely affect children, low-income families and mental-health patients in our state.

I am excited with the bills that we've passed in the House so far. But I will be more enthused when we can fund priorities for education and health care when we write the budget.

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. I hope it will help you learn more about my work in Olympia and encourage you to contact my office with your questions and comments

Sincerely,

A stylized, cursive signature of Phyllis Gutierrez-Kenney in dark ink.

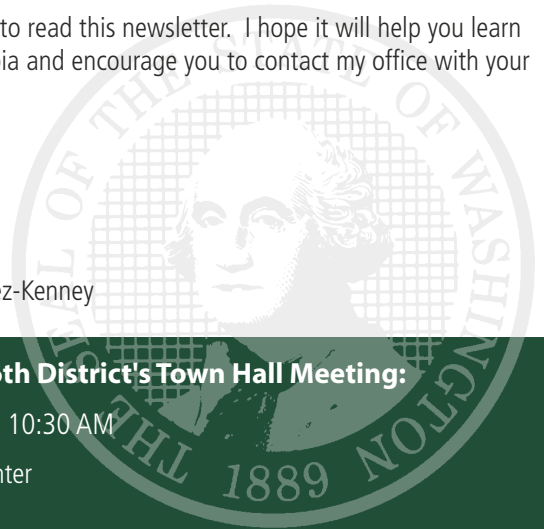
Representative Phyllis Gutiérrez-Kenney

Please join me at the 46th District's Town Hall Meeting:

Saturday, March 26, 2005 at 10:30 AM

Meadowbrook Recreation Center
10517 - 35th Ave. N.E.

(Corner of 35th & 105th, near Nathan Hale High School)



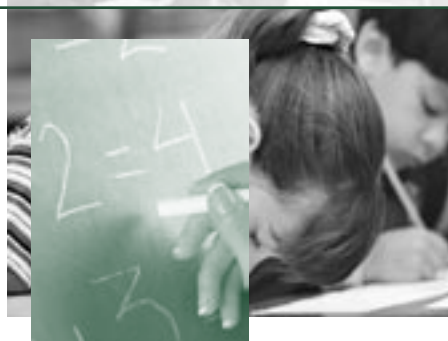
A Report to the 46th District

Sign up for my weekly e-memo!

Send me an e-mail (kenney.phyllis@leg.wa.gov) so I can add you to my list and you'll receive legislative news from my computer to yours every week. It saves money on postage and keeps you informed about everything that's happening under the dome. You can unsubscribe at any time and your e-mail address will not be shared with anyone else.

Representative Phyllis Gutierrez Kenney

BASIC EDUCATION is our Paramount Duty



Basic education is vital to over 1 million K-12 students in our state. The state Constitution assigns the Legislature's paramount duty to provide for basic education funding for all children.

A lot has changed since our funding system for basic education was created over a quarter century ago. In that time, we have created a graduation requirement and faced new challenges.

The new global economy means that education is about preparing our children for a dynamic, knowledge-based workforce for the 21st Century.

Simple Majority for our schools

Simple Majority is one step closer to the governor's desk this year. The House passed the legislation with strong,

bipartisan support. Our Seattle Public Schools depend on levy dollars to fund enrichment and extracurricular programs.

By allowing voters to pass school levies with a 50 percent plus one simple majority, we will no longer put our schools at risk with the 60 percent super majority rule.

Help for our teachers

Our hard working teachers have gone several years without cost of living adjustments. Teachers in Seattle endure some of the highest cost of living expenses in the state. We cannot risk losing good teachers by having them relocate to more affordable areas of the state. Funding voter-approved Initiative 732 is a top priority this year.

HIGHER EDUCATION for the 21st Century



Creating more enrollment slots

By 2010, we will need 22,500 additional state-funded enrollment slots to meet the increasing demand to attend

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2005-07 Budget Outlook

college. This is a challenge that we absolutely cannot fail. I am proposing several options to expand the opportunity to earn a college degree.

- Expand branch campuses: Based on recommendations by the Higher Education Coordinating Board, I am supporting the expansion of UW-Tacoma, UW-Bothell, Tri Cities WSU and moving to make WSU-Vancouver into four-year programs.
- Transfer slots: Our students attend many of our community colleges with the expectation of transferring to a four-year university. Limited space at UW and WSU prevent many transfer students from fulfilling this goal. My legislation adds more enrollment slots for juniors and seniors who want to transfer to a four-year institution.
- The Applied Baccalaureate: I am supporting a pilot project to grant the State Board of Community or Technical Colleges and the Higher Education Coordinating Board the opportunity to approve an applied baccalaureate degree.

Our economy is still recovering from the recent slowdown. The state's reliance on sales tax means that our revenues have decreased because people are spending less. Meanwhile, costs for the state's obligations like education, health care and public safety have risen.

A state Supreme Court ruling regarding our estate tax law resulted in a loss of \$431 million. This increased the projected state budget deficit to \$2.2 billion for the current biennium.

While we wait for Governor Gregoire to release her budget in March, the Legislature is faced with the question of making further cuts or raising new revenue. Without additional revenue, we will have to cut or reduce funding for programs and services such as:

- Class size reductions authorized by voter-approved Initiative 728, leaving our state with some of the most crowded classrooms in the nation

- New enrollment slots, meaning many of our children won't get into UW, WSU or at other public institutions in Washington
- Health care for 17,200 low-income adults on the Basic Health Plan

TRANSPORTATION:



We are moving forward with many large and complex transportation projects. These are essential to maintaining the economy of the Puget Sound region.

The state is studying several options to replace the Alaskan Way Viaduct and the SR 520 bridge. Each one is vulnerable to structural failure in an earthquake. Planned replacements would meet seismic standards and provide congestion relief.

The 5-cent gas tax increase or "nickel package" of 2003 raised funds for a down payment on a replacement for the SR 520 bridge and viaduct:

- SR 520 received \$52 million from the nickel package. The estimated project cost for a 4-lane bridge is



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Protecting Our Children:



Banning Toxic Flame Retardants

Studies show that a toxic flame retardant called polybrominated diphenyl ether (PBDE) is building up in the bodies of Northwest residents, it has been found in breast milk and it remains in the environment. Used in household materials such as foam, plastic and electrical components, the substance comes in contact with us everyday. It has the

potential to affect the development of fetuses, infants and young children.

I am supporting a ban of PBDEs in favor of safer alternatives. The wellbeing of our children and long-term health is at stake.

Safe Drinking Water in Schools

The reports of high levels of lead in our schools caused parents to send bottled water to school with their children. The aging pipes and plumbing in our schools is a dangerous source for lead in the water supply.

I have introduced legislation that will protect the health of our children from exposure to lead and other toxic metals in school drinking water. This bill would require school districts to test their drinking water, take action to fix problems and report the results to you and the Department of Health.

\$2 billion. The 6-lane option is \$2.9 billion.

- Viaduct received \$177 million from the nickel package. The estimated project cost ranges from \$2.3 to \$4 billion depending on the replacement option chosen.

It is important that we work closely on the local, state and federal level to secure the funding needed to complete these projects. Investments in transportation will mean more time with our families and less time in traffic.

If you think gas is high at \$2.00+ a gallon, keep in mind that one gallon of designer coffee costs about \$42.00